

**STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE FRANK A. LoBIONDO, CHAIRMAN –  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
COAST GUARD AND MARITIME TRANSPORTATION  
OVERSIGHT FIELD HEARING ON THE  
NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR MARITIME SECURITY  
JANUARY 24, 2006**

The Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation is meeting this morning to review the National Strategy for Maritime Security and several Federal programs to enhance security in the maritime domain.

This field hearing is another in a series of hearings that the Subcommittee has held since the enactment of the Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002 (MTSA) to review the state of security in our Nation's ports and abroad. Under the MTSA, the Coast Guard and other Federal agencies have developed and implemented critical maritime security programs, systems, and procedures to improve our awareness of activities in the maritime domain and our capabilities to prevent future attacks to the Maritime Transportation System. However, despite this progress, several key mandates under MTSA have not yet been completed.

One of these critical mandates is the National Maritime Transportation Security Plan. Despite repeated calls by this Subcommittee and a deadline that was enacted as part of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act last year, we still do not have this comprehensive national plan. I urge the Coast Guard and the Department of Homeland Security to complete this plan so that it can be implemented as soon as possible.

While we do not have the National Maritime Transportation Security Plan, the Administration has recently developed and released the National Strategy for Maritime Security to further coordinate Federal maritime security efforts. The National Strategy is supported by eight components which address specific threats and challenges in the maritime environment.

These components call for increased cooperation, integration, and, in some cases, expansion of existing programs to enhance maritime security. The components do not, however, contain many details on how Federal agencies will accomplish the strategic objectives outlined under the Strategy. I am very interested to hear our witnesses testify this morning on how their respective agencies will take the recommendations and put them into practice in our ports and on the high seas.

The Strategy also calls for the Transportation Security Agency and the Coast Guard to conclude development of a Transportation Workers Identification Credential or TWIC card that will ensure the identity of maritime workers that have access to sensitive areas aboard vessels and in our ports. I hope the inclusion of this recommendation signals that the Administration is intent on finally completing this rulemaking.

Congress required the implementation of a TWIC card when we passed MTSA four years ago. The original deadline for the pilot program was December 2003, and regulations to implement the program nationwide were supposed to go into effect in 2004. I thank our local

Delaware River ports for their participation in the pilot program, but it's time for the TSA to move forward with this program nationwide. I look forward to learning more about the results of the pilot program and expect our witnesses to provide us with an update on when we can expect the now long overdue regulations.

The National Strategy for Maritime Security is an important step in our efforts to improve our maritime security responsibilities, but there is still a lot of work that must be done to take these plans and to translate them into programs and systems that provide enhanced security. I hope that the witnesses' testimony will address some of these challenges and that the Subcommittee will learn how the Federal government plans to implement the recommendations.

I welcome all of the witnesses and thank them for their testimony.